

**CONGRESSMAN SHERWOOD BOEHLERT (R-NY)**  
**FLOOR STATEMENT ON GENERAL DEBATE FOR OIL DRILLING**  
**June 29, 2006**

Mr. Chairman:

I rise in the strongest possible opposition to this bill.

First, we should not be opening our coasts to oil drilling when we have not taken the first step, not the first step, to conserve oil. Drilling today just depletes oil we may need later. Conserving now means saving more oil year after year after year. But the Rules Committee did not make in order my amendment on fuel economy standards, which at least would have allowed us to have a debate on demand and supply at the same time.

But my opposition goes beyond any general concern about oil drilling because this bill does far more than simply lift the longstanding moratoriums on drilling. This bill basically hands over our coastal waters to the oil companies and makes it hard for states or citizens to do anything about that.

That's no exaggeration. The bill makes it difficult for a state to bar drilling. Then if a state allows drilling, the bill eliminates fundamental parts of the current process that allow states and citizens to review drilling plans to make sure they are environmentally sound and consistent with other possible uses of the waters. Then the bill blocks any use of the waters that could interfere with drilling. And finally, to add a Constitutional insult to all that coastal injury, it enables the Secretary of the Interior to threaten to withhold funding from states if the Secretary thinks Congress is interfering with oil drilling. This bill is breathtaking in its arrogance.

Whether you are for or against off-shore drilling, you ought to be against this bill. Once your constituents find out what's really in it, you will have a lot of explaining to do.

Let me add that the manager's amendment does nothing to alleviate my concerns. The amendment leaves in place all the unprecedented provisions I just mentioned. It leaves in place at least one new mandatory spending program. It leaves in place most royalty breaks for oil companies. It even adds a new penalty to coerce states into opening waters to drilling.

The manager's amendment is also rife with financial gimmickry. It actually increases the revenues denied the federal treasury over the long haul. It just delays the phase in of the revenue sharing to states, but it raises the maximum amount states will get – with no requirement to report how the money has been used.

So this is a bad bill, and it's still a bad bill with the manager's amendment. It goes far beyond what is necessary to permit drilling off our coasts. It creates a new reign of oil interests that would make John D. Rockefeller blush.

I urge its defeat.